

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

161929Z Apr 03

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ABUJA 000697

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/15/2013

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: LEGISLATIVE RESULTS AND REACTIONS

Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter. Reasons: 1.5 (B & D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has posted results from about 80 percent of the Senate and House races around the country. Registering over 50 percent of the vote nationwide, the ruling PDP will retain its majority in both chambers unless there is a radical reversal in the voting trends. If this election is a forecast of the April 19 Presidential and gubernatorial contests, this weekend will affirm the power of incumbency in Nigeria. President Obasanjo and the lion's share of Governors will be returned to office. However, there is a wide variance between INEC's official results and the expectations of many opposition parties, particularly the ANPP and AD. The dissonance is widespread and opposition party leaders have been huddling to determine next steps. Accusations of vote tampering and manipulating tabulations are growing and many seem credible. By reversing previously announced results in some races, INEC has not helped matters and has only added to the opposition's suspicions. The political temperature has increased significantly. The April 19 election will be tense and the specter of violence looms too near in many places. Press reports indicate that elections that did not hold on April 12 took place variously on April 13, 14 or 15 in areas of six states in the South-South and Southeast. END SUMMARY.

#### REPORTED RESULTS

2. (C) Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is reporting results in about 80 percent of the Senate and House districts around the country. The ruling PDP is almost assured of retaining its majority on both sides of the National Assembly with 170 seats in the House going to the PDP. (The PDP needs 181 seats for a majority.) The ANPP has improved its representation, winning 80 seats thus far. The AD is winning 30 seats and other parties gaining representation include UNPP (two seats), NDP (two), PRP (one), and AGPA (one). In the Senate, the PDP has won 60 of the 109 seats. The ANPP has 25 seats and the AD has won just 5 seats. No other parties have yet been awarded a Senate seat. Unless reporting trends reverse significantly, PDP likely will be announced as the winner of at least 15 of the remaining 19 seats in the upper house, a significant increase in its existing majority (68/109).

3. (U) Press reports indicate that elections that could not hold on April 12 took place variously on April 13, 14 or 15 in areas of six states in the South-South and Southeast -- Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, Anambra, Akwa Ibom and Cross River.

#### HARBINGER

4. (C) The "bandwagon effect" is said to be the irresistible force in Nigerian electoral politics. Consequently, many Nigerians see these results as a preview of the gubernatorial and Presidential elections scheduled for April 19. If the legislative returns are indicative of this Saturday's likely outcome, the PDP could be expected to maintain its current 21 gubernatorial seats and perhaps capture a few state capitals in the Southwest. The results from April 12 would indicate that the incumbent PDP President Obasanjo could expect to win at least 55 percent of the popular vote. The ANPP would not exceed 30 percent of the national vote, with little hope of gaining much ground by teaming with any of the other opposition parties, except for the AD (which is more likely to stand aloof than to join forces with Buhari). Making Buhari's position even

bleaker, the ANPP would be unable to meet the constitutional requirement for a presidential victor to win 25 percent of the vote in two-thirds (25) of the 37 state jurisdictions (36 states plus the Federal Capital Territory). Thus far, the ANPP is polling less than 25 percent in 18 states.

#### CRITICISM MOUNTS

15. (C) For many races, INEC's returns diverge from the expectations of many observers and activists in all the parties. The magnitude of the PDP "landslide" has surprised security elements of the government, as well. A senior State Security Service official told PolOff that his organization was "studying the results," with concern mounting for maintaining public order.

16. (U) General Muhammadu Buhari, the ANPP Presidential candidate, denounced the election results, calling them a "coup against democracy." Castigating the results as "spurious," Buhari said "the rigging and fraud that attended the collation of the results of the just concluded election is so blatant that 1983 now looks like some child's play." (NOTE: Buhari knows about coups against a troubled democracy. He took power in a late-1983 coup that ousted an unpopular civilian regime widely viewed as corrupt and ineffective after it manipulated a "landslide" victory in elections earlier that year. Buhari's allusion to 1983 is viewed as ominous by some and by others as ironic. END NOTE.) Another Presidential candidate, Gani Fawehinmi, described the parliamentary election as a "rigging spree." Making the same allusion as Buhari, he said, "the same scenario as in 1983 is playing out." ANPP Chairman Don Etiebet issued a statement on behalf of 12 of the 14 political parties participating in these elections (all except NCP and PDP) on April 15 rejecting the results. While the parties identified many alleged irregularities, Etiebet stressed that the parties would not boycott the Presidential and gubernatorial elections. Buhari echoed this in a broadcast on BBC Hausa service. He reiterated his warning to be vigilant for fraud, pointing out that he had issued the same advice at almost every campaign stop in the past few months.

#### FUNNY BUSINESS (POLITICAL STYLE)

17. (C) The INEC results surprised many people and, in many instances, are seen to diverge with preliminary indications based on field observations of party agents, domestic and international monitors and Mission officers. Internal discrepancies are found throughout the results announced thus far by INEC. Perhaps the most stunning development is the overwhelming PDP victory in the Southwest region. The PDP basically dominated the results in a region up to then in the firm grasp of the AD. While the PDP was expected to make some inroads, according to both AD and PDP partisans, the margin of PDP victory was vast. One PDP campaigner told PolOff that his expectation, based on consultation with his AD counterparts immediately after the close of the polls, was that the PDP would pick up about six Senate seats and between 8 and 12 House seats. "When I woke on Sunday, I was embarrassed and unable to explain the turnaround," he said. A similar assessment was provided by an AD campaigner, who thought the PDP would gain six Senate and between 6 and ten House seats in the Southwest.

18. (C) The reported 90 percent voters turnout in Rivers State (South-South) is also being heavily questioned. MissionOffs reported a light turnout in Rivers, ranging from 15 to 30 percent of the registered voters. MissionOffs also encountered strong support for the ANPP in many areas. However, INEC results show that the PDP won roughly 90 percent of this very high turn-out, making for an embarrassing rout of the ANPP. Reported turnout or results in Edo State (South-South) and Katsina State (Northwest) are also at odds with Emboffs firsthand, albeit incomplete, observations. Agents from both PDP and opposition parties highlight results from many other locations, including Adamawa, Bauchi and Kaduna States in the North and Imo, Enugu and Anambra States in the Southeast that did not jibe with their unofficial tallies. Other critics comment that awarding some races to one party on Sunday and reversing the decision on Monday raises questions of the accuracy and efficiency of INEC's collation efforts.

19. (C) COMMENT: The April 12 results thus far show the PDP to be the big and only real winner. The ANPP did well only in the North and did not gain the ground in the South-South and Southeast that they had expected. The AD was roused from its own house and may have been dealt a mortal blow. The other opposition parties' vote totals were little more than crumbs. In effect, the National Assembly vote, if repeated on April 19, would make the PDP the only national party, rendering the ANPP a northern party, wrecking the AD and marking the other parties as entirely inconsequential. Thus, the cries of foul and cheating must be seen from this perspective; the opposition parties are fighting for sheer survival. However, more is at play. The allegations of fraud and tampering are multiplying and many cannot be dismissed. Many of these allegations are credible and jibe with our own observations. While our observations were more spot-checking than rigorous monitoring, it would defy statistical probability to suggest that the voting and tabulation trends we observed in our sampling in, for example, Rivers and Katsina had virtually no external validity. The opposition parties have grounds to be upset and their "rejection" of the results was a predictable reaction. However, they have decided not to boycott but to work together to observe more stringently the vote tabulation process. Thus, the April 19 election will be conducted in an atmosphere of palpable suspicion and distrust. It will make for an uneasy Saturday and a tension-filled Easter. INEC faces its biggest trial yet.

JETER